

# CURRENT TOPICS

RECENTLY IT WAS REPORTED THAT printed appeals were in circulation in Kishineff with a view of fomenting the anti-Jewish population to renewed assaults, robberies and massacres of the Jews. The New York World sent a dispatch to the czar asking him to allay these apprehensions with an assurance that the ample power at his command will be employed in preventing such a calamity. The imperial minister of the interior replied to the World as follows: "Fears of forthcoming troubles in Kishineff absolutely unfounded. Reports of anti-Jewish riots are consequence of agitation led by persons evilly disposed against Russian government."

THE STORY OF "THE OLDEST DINNER which has ever been eaten," is told by the Brussels correspondent for the New York Herald. According to this correspondent, an antiquary in the city of Brussels named Goebel invited his friends to this spread, a description of which is given by one of the guests as follows: "At that dinner I ate apples that ripened more than eighteen hundred years ago; bread made from wheat grown before the children of Israel passed through the Red sea, spread with butter which was made when Elizabeth was queen of England; and I washed down the repast with wine which was old when Columbus was playing barefoot with the boys in Genoa. The apples were from an earthen jar taken from the ruins of Pompeii. The wheat was taken from a chamber in one of the Pyramids, the butter from a stone shelf in an old well in Scotland, where for several centuries it had lain in an earthen crock in icy water, and the wine was recovered from an old vault in the city of Corinth. There were six guests at the table, and each had a mouthful of bread and a teaspoonful of wine, but was permitted to help himself bountifully to the butter, there being several pounds of it. The apple jar held about two-thirds of a gallon. The fruit was sweet and as finely flavored as if it had been picked but yesterday."

THE INDIANA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH has prohibited the further employment of male and female teachers in the public schools in the state because on examination they have been found more or less afflicted with tuberculosis. Referring to this order, the Atlanta Constitution says: "This is a new turn in the endeavors of authorities to prevent the spread of the dread disease of consumption. But it seems a very proper regulation and the precedent thus set by the Indiana board of health may be eventually followed by those of other states. The mortality statistics of the country show that tuberculosis is an insidiously increasing and fatal affliction of the race, and that there is, as yet, in spite of serums and other inventions, no way to minimize its prevalence and fatalities except to take precautions against allowing the affected to spread the disease among healthy people."

CANADIANS ARE JUST NOW MANIFESTING considerable interest with respect to the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. The Ottawa correspondent for the Philadelphia Press says: "It is suggested the situation imperatively requires Canada to lay down a Monroe doctrine of her own, with British backing, that Canada through Great Britain should demand a prior option on the purchase of the French and Danish territory adjacent to her coasts and should not stand for any other nation, particularly the United States, acquiring territory within her sphere of influence. 'When a Tommy in barracks is troubled by an aggressive and troublesome neighbor,' one editorial says, 'he draws a line with pipe clay around his cot and the man who passes that chalkline knows he is up against a fight. It is time Johnny Canuck drew his chalkline.'"

IN CANADA THE OPINION SEEMS TO BE quite general that difficulties between the Canadian government and that of the United States will soon arise with respect to Hudson's bay. On this point, the Ottawa correspondent for the Press says: "The discussions on the subject here have attracted attention in England. The London Express editorially suggests that the parliament of Canada change the name of the bay to

'the Canadian sea,' and goes on to declare that 'Canada is facing with resolute intention a new dispute with the United States—fraught with far more serious possibilities than was the Alaskan question.' Canada's territorial rights on the shores surrounding the bay being acknowledged, where is the danger of complications with the United States? The answer is that United States whalers have been using these waters and occupying islands along the coasts and territory on the mainland for years without let or hindrance or any assertion of British or Canadian jurisdiction or sovereignty. Hence Canada's precautionary measures, the establishment of police posts and the decision to patrol the waters of the bay and assert the Canadian title. The main question, however, is whether Hudson bay is or is not an open sea. Canada contends it is closed, the only entrance being a narrow strait, the territories on both sides of which are all Canadian, and this is the main point on which it is expected some day or other the Washington authorities may raise an international question."

A BILL HAS BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE Maryland legislature conferring upon Admiral Schley a residence in the state. It is explained by a correspondent for the Philadelphia Public Ledger that Admiral Schley has never established residence elsewhere than in Maryland, his native state, but he has in the course of his long career in the navy lived in so many places and since his retirement has traveled so much, that there is some question in his mind as to just where his legal home may be. Some political significance is attached to this move although Admiral Schley's friends insist that there is no significance other than the admiral's natural desire to obtain indisputable legal residence.

DR. HENRY THOMAS, TRANSLATOR AT the state department, died at the national capital December 28. Dr. Thomas was a resident of Poughkeepsie, N. Y. He was a great student of languages and mastered twenty different languages, acquiring an international reputation as a philologist. Referring to Dr. Thomas, the Washington correspondent for the Philadelphia Public Ledger says: "He could read all the languages spoken in Europe except Russian. The latter, he said, he had never been able to master, although he could make accurate and rapid translations from it if necessary. The others he knew so well that he rarely showed any hesitancy in reading and writing them, and in several he was an accomplished conversationalist. Before coming to Washington, Dr. Thomas was instructor in the family of S. F. B. Morse, and traveled around the world with the celebrated inventor. Dr. Thomas knew, as a basis for the modern languages, Latin and Greek, and in addition, Hebrew, Sanscrit, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Italian, German, French, Swedish, Spanish, Norwegian, Danish and Dutch. He was descended from an old Dutch family in New York, and was proud of his knowledge of the Dutch language. He was regarded as an authority by linguists all over the world, who often sent him manuscripts for translation, and his opinions in philological matters were sought by many of the most learned teachers. His place in the state department is one that cannot be filled. For many years he had been occupied in collecting a large library of books in all the known languages of the earth. He was 68 years old."

A BILL WAS RECENTLY INTRODUCED IN congress looking to the erection at Peterborough, N. H., of a monument to General James Miller, the hero of Lundy's Lane. General Miller won the peculiar title of "I'll try, sir," and many people will remember this man by the reference "I'll try, sir" Miller. General Miller was born in Peterborough, April 25, 1776. He died July 7, 1851. In 1808 he entered the United States army as major of the Fourth infantry, and became lieutenant colonel in 1810. At the battle of Brownstown, August 9, 1812, he was breveted colonel for gallantry in that action. He was colonel of the Twenty-first infantry at Lundy's Lane. It is recorded that at that battle the success of the Americans depended on the capture of a British battery. "Can you take it," asked General Win-

field Scott. "I'll try, sir," replied General Miller. Miller led his command to the assault, captured the battery, and decided the fortunes of the day. For his service he was breveted brigadier general and was voted a gold medal by congress.

REFERRING TO THE HERO OF LUNDY'S Lane, the Washington correspondent for the Chicago Post says: "Gen. James Miller did many other things besides saying that he would try to capture a certain battery and then going and capturing it. Before the Lundy's Lane affair Miller, with a small command, thrashed a superior force of British and Indians at Magagua. Miller drove the enemy for miles and wished to pursue it further, but General Hull would not permit him. It was only a week after this that Hull surrendered his force of over 2,000 men to the British commander whom Miller had licked out of his boots only a week before. This first Miller matter has been lost sight of largely because of the disastrous termination of the Detroit campaign. Miller distinguished himself once more after the Lundy's Lane affair. At Fort Erie he had command of the center column of General Brown's army, which routed an apparently overwhelmingly superior force of the British. Brown gave Miller due credit for his part in the fight. There is something that Miller did and something that he said which possibly is more to the point nowadays than even his military service. After the war of 1812 he went back to his farm near Peterborough, and plowed and chopped wood. When he was asked why he was playing Cincinnatus when he might have nearly anything in the gift of the government he said: 'When men begin leaving the farms for the cities the nation will begin to decay.'"

THE GOVERNMENT GEOGRAPHERS ARE struggling with the vexing question involved in the proper way to designate the people of Panama. The Washington correspondent for the Philadelphia Public Ledger says: "The perplexity which besets them may be partially understood when it is remembered that the residents of the isthmian republic are variously called Panamese, Panamanians, Panamans, Panamians, Panamanos, Panamists, Isthmians and in other official nomenclature have been called Isthmenians. The board connected with the geological survey, which deals with the matter of geographical names, will meet in a few days and take up the matter in earnest and determine what the new fledged nation shall be officially nominated in the geographies, the histories, the documents and the parlance of diplomacy."

THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF THE PUBLIC debt shows that at the close of business on December 31, 1903, the debt, less cash in the treasury, amounted to \$914,150,880. This is a decrease for the month of \$11,618,530. The debt is recapitulated as follows: Interest-bearing debt, \$901,747,220; debt on which interest has ceased since maturity, \$1,196,539; debt bearing no interest, \$390,582,025; total, \$1,293,525,775. This amount, however, does not include \$935,328,869 in certificates and treasury notes outstanding, which are offset by an equal amount of cash on hand held for their redemption. The cash in the treasury is classified as follows: Gold reserve funds, \$150,000,000; trust funds, \$935,328,869; general fund, \$148,133,774; in national bank depositories, \$172,159,338; total, \$1,405,621,982, against which there are demand liabilities outstanding amounting to \$1,026,247,086, which leaves a cash balance on hand of \$379,374,895. The cash in the treasury was increased during the month by \$10,137,465, which is largely due to decreases in disbursing officers' balances.

THE GREATEST SOLDIER IN JAPAN IS General Viscount Katsura, who became prime minister two years ago. Referring to this officer, a writer in the New York Press says: "He began his fighting career in 1867, during the civil war, which resulted in the overthrow of the old order of things in Japan and the adoption of western civilization. He was only a lieutenant then, but he became famous for his extraordinary courage. He was always in the thickest of the fight, always the first to volunteer to lead a forlorn